

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-10, 23-29, 53, 54 and 56-58 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 27 is amended. No new matter is added by the above amendments.

Applicant notes with appreciation the identification of allowable subject matter in claim 27. Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

The Office Action objected to claim 27 on the grounds that "the opening" lacked antecedent basis. Both occurrences of "the opening" have been changed to "the closable opening" so that it is clear that the openings referenced in claim 27 correspond to the closable openings defined in claim 26. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1-10, 23-25, 29, 53, 54 and 56-58 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP-A-7-240366 to Masaaki et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,825,470 to Miyai et al. further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,356,338 to Arakawa. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The applied references, singularly or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the combinations of features recited in the independent claims of this application. The independent claims are patentable over Masaaki et al. and Miyai et al. for the reasons set forth in Applicant's Amendment filed on October 17, 2005. In response to Applicants' arguments, the Office Action cites Arakawa and asserts that the argued differences would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art. The Office Action asserts that Arakawa discloses placing various smaller components of a semiconductor production system within a large chamber (booth 14 shown in Fig. 1). The Office Action asserts that "it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the chambers integrated into one large chamber and thereby a space of transport that retains air tightness to provide a compact efficient production system that is protected from the external environment." See, for example, page 4, lines 3-5 and page 5, lines 15-18 of the Office

Action. The Office Action, thus, asserts that the booth 14 of Arakawa suggests the "airtight stage chamber" of independent claims 1 and 56, and the "space in which air-tightness is maintained" of independent claims 6, 23, 57 and 58. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The booth 14 of Arakawa is not (and does not suggest) an airtight chamber. Arakawa teaches that: (i) "open-air inlet port 24" continuously supplies fresh air to the booth 14 so as to maintain a positive pressure in the booth 14 (col. 3, lines 48-52), and (ii) "fine gaps" exist in the booth through which fine foreign materials could enter if not for the positive pressure that is maintained in the booth 14 (col. 3, lines 55-58). Thus, Arakawa does not disclose or suggest the modifications to the Masaaki et al./Miyai et al. system that are proposed in the Office Action. Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action uses impermissible hindsight in combining the references, and then makes further, non-suggested modifications, to reject the independent claims of this application. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 6, 23 and 56-58, as well as their dependent claims, are patentable over Masaaki et al., Miyai et al. and Arakawa. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 26 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Masaaki et al. in view of Miyai et al. and Arakawa, and further in view of JP-A-8-83750 to Aoyama. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 26 and 28 are patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to their corresponding independent claim 23. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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MAC/ccs

Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

Date: May 2, 2006

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